

IOWA COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Wednesday, April 7, 2010 - 10:00 a.m.

Ford Memorial Conference Room

Iowa Veterans Home

Marshalltown, Iowa

PRESENT: Steve Mulcahy, Chairperson, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Don Delamore, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Todd Jacobus, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs – by telephone
Francis McAllister, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Darlene McMartin, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Laurel Phipps, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Jean Schroeder, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Rosetta Waychus, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Mickey Williams, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

ABSENT: None.

STAFF: Patrick Palmersheim, Executive Director, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
John Mathes, Interim Commandant, Iowa Veterans Home
Nancy Morford, Admin. Assist., Commandant's Office, Iowa Veterans Home
Dennis Mack, Director, Employee Services, Iowa Veterans Home
Stan Freeborn, Adjutant, Iowa Veterans Home
Missy Miller, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
Diana Steiner, Budget Analyst, Iowa Veterans Home

GUESTS: Samantha Schaff, Decatur County Veterans Affairs
Mike Kuhn, Marion County Veterans Affairs
Elizabeth Ledvina, Tama County Veterans Affairs
Bret McLain, Story County Veterans Affairs
Al Flyr, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Greg Reed, VA Regional Office
John Derner, Adjutant, The American Legion
Zeke Furlong, Iowa Legislature
Barry Sharp, Iowa City VA Medical Center
Valerie Buckingham, Iowa City VA Medical Center
Sue Lerdal, Legislative Service Agency
Jason Chapman, Iowa Legislature
Bennie Spain, Black Hawk County Veterans Affairs
Don Cooper, VA Central Iowa Health Care System
Susan Martin, VA Central Iowa Health Care System

cc: Joni Klaassen, Governor's Office
Bo Berntsen, Policy Advisor, Governor's Office
Barbara Galloway, Assistant Attorney, Attorney General's Office
Shashi Goel, Department of Management
Sue Lerdal, Legislative Fiscal Bureau
Jenny Schneider, Auditor's Office
Jessica Holmes, DAS
Steve Ainger, IDAS
John Mathes, Interim Commandant, IVH
Nancy Morford, Administrative Assistant, IVH
John Derner, Adjutant, The American Legion
Don Emdia, Commander, AMVETS
Clark Leckington, Executive Director, AMVETS
Steve Mulcahy, Secretary, Iowa Veterans Council
David Davis, Director, VA Regional Office
Elizabeth Ledvina, President, IACCVA
Vacant, Adjutant/PM, Marine Corps League
Jerry Meek, Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Marty Douglas, Adjutant, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Lisa Purvis, Legislative Liaison, IVH
Tom Ashworth, Senate Republican Caucus Staff
Jason Chapman, House Republican Caucus Staff
Jon Schneider, President, Paralyzed Veterans of America
Reggie Richardson, President, The Retired Officers Association
Rickie Lynn Cox, Recording Secretary, UAW Veterans Committee
John Bishop, President, Vietnam Veterans of America

Larry Jatho, Adjutant, Disabled American Veterans
Tom Snyder, Commander, American Ex-Prisoners of War
Jerry Frederiksen, Adjutant/Quartermaster, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Barry Sharp, Director, VAMC, Iowa City
Senator Daryl Beall, Chair, Senate VA Committee
Senator James Seymour, RM, Senate VA Committee
Representative Ray Zirkelbach, Chair, House VA Committee
Representative Matt Windschilt, RM, House VA Committee
Julie Simon, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff
Zeke Furlong, House Democratic Research Staff

Liz Erickson, Director, Iowa WAVES National
Robert Harris, Grand Correspondent, 40 & 8
Robert Heppe, Grand Chef de Gare, 40 & 8
Don Cooper, Director, VA Central Iowa Healthcare System, Des Moines
Ron Healy, Iowa UAW Veterans Committee
David Hunter, Commander, Marine Corps League
David Thornburg, Commander, Disabled American Veterans
Kenny Lloyd, State Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America
Larry Larson, Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars

NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE "UNAPPROVED" UNTIL ACCEPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

APPROVED: Steve Mulcahy **DATE:** 7-7-10
Steve Mulcahy, Chairperson, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

- Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:59 a.m. by Steve Mulcahy, Chairperson, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs.
- Pledge of Allegiance/
Moment of Silence: All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairperson Mulcahy requested a moment of silence for our departed veterans, POW's, those missing in action (MIAs) and those on active duty at this time.
- Announcements: Today is Tornado Drill day. When notified, we will have to go to the basement for 10-15 minutes.
- If you want to order lunch today, they have walking tacos and a can of pop for \$3.
- Roll Call: Roll call of Commission members was completed by the Meeting Secretary. A quorum was present.
- Fix Agenda: Chairperson Mulcahy stated there is one change to the agenda. After #14, Determination of the next Commission Meeting and prior to adjournment, we need to add review Trust Fund applications.
- Welcome/Intro. of
Guests: Chairperson Mulcahy welcomed everyone in attendance. A round table of introductions was held.
- Approval of Minutes: Corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of the 1/6/10 and 2/19/10 meetings were called for. Commissioner Schroeder moved to approve the above-listed minutes as distributed. Second by Commissioner McAllister. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote taken: Commissioner Delamore: yes; Commissioner Jacobus: yes; Commissioner McAllister: yes; Commissioner McMartin: yes; Commissioner Phipps: yes; Commissioner Schroeder: yes; Commissioner Waychus: yes; Commissioner Williams: yes; Chairperson Mulcahy: yes. Motion carried. Minutes of 1/6/10 and 2/19/10 approved as distributed.
- VA Regional Office: Greg Reed gave an update from the VA Regional Office. Regional Office Director, Dave Davis, has returned from Texas for 90-day detail and spent the winter in Houston. He had a previous commitment today and could not be here. We received over 1,000 claims the month of March. Roughly one-third of those were original claims. The other two-thirds were supplemental. Our work force has increased over the last year from roughly 82 to 134. We are anticipating a tsunami-like wave of claims coming in. Not only the three conditions associated with Agent Orange, but now they are going to be doing 9 additional presumptive for Gulf War illnesses. We don't know exactly what those are going to be yet. We have now 381 claims in a holding pattern and these are from the three additional conditions, the ischemic heart

disease, Parkinson's and the hairy cell leukemia. We have not received the regulations yet on how to rate those claims. As soon as those regs are received, we will start rating those claims.

Des Moines Regional Office has been asked to add a second shift. We have submitted some numbers, but speaking for Mr. Davis and myself, we would rather not have a night shift. Instead, we would like to increase our work force to do the claims during the day.

Senator Grassley came down to see us last week. I thanked him and Senator Harkin for the support they give all veterans in Iowa. When it comes to veterans, there is not any politics. I just wanted to tell him how grateful we were for all of the support he has given us.

There is this new program coming out, called e-benefit. We still do not know all of the ramifications, but are anticipating that eventually we will be able to go on-line and go into a veteran's record and see the status of his claims. Right now it is in the infancy stage.

Commissioner McMartin commented she just read the VA is doing a pilot program in four different Regional Offices in regard to expediting claims: giving the veteran a checklist of what he needs to do or provide to help his claim go through quicker. Greg stated that Des Moines is one of the Regional Offices included in the pilot project. Commissioner McMartin asked if he has that checklist so he can share with the county offices? Greg stated not yet, but it should be coming out shortly.

Greg also explained the VA will be calling veterans to see if they need help. Commissioner McMartin and Chairperson Mulcahy both stated their concerns regarding not knowing if incoming calls to veterans are legitimate or not. They asked for names of VA staff who will be calling by telephone for verification purposes.

Greg continued that they are trying to expedite claims. Their goal and the Secretary's goal is to get the claims less than 125 days. Right now, they are right on target—32% of claims are 125 days or less.

Chairperson Mulcahy thanked Mr. Reed.

Iowa City VA Update: Barry Sharp announced the week of September 6 will be their National Disabled Veterans Tee Tournament— a golf tournament for disabled veterans. There will be other events, including kayaking. They need volunteers.

Meeting break: A break for the tornado drill was held from 10:15 to 10:32 a.m.

Iowa City VA Update Cont'd: Mr. Sharp continued his report. There is an All the Way Home event scheduled for Saturday, April 24, in Dubuque, Iowa. It is an effort by a three-state area, Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa, put on by the Dubuque community. There will be over 100 booths at the Five Flags Center in Dubuque. It is a great opportunity to have a lot of different entities in one location from the local level to the federal level. Staff will be there to enroll veterans, to do some counseling and just provide general information.

Saturday, April 10, they will celebrate the 5th anniversary of the Women's Health Clinic in their Coralville offices by inviting Congressman Loebsack, along with several other members. That has been a great success. He has received a lot of positive feedback since he arrived in Iowa City about four years ago for the work they are doing there.

There is a lot of construction going on in Iowa City. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held this week for the new locked in-patient mental health ward. We will transfer patients from 9 East to 9 West. Last week a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the in-patient medical ward. Patients were transferred from 7 East to 7 West. Mr. Sharp encouraged everyone to stop in and look at these wards sometime. They had multiple patient rooms with multiple patient bathrooms. Now the rooms have private baths, private rooms, every room has a lift in it that takes them from the bed right into the shower. Another nice feature is that housekeeping has access to the dirty linen by opening the door from the hallway. They do not have to go into the room at all. Same thing for restocking the room with gloves, etc. They can do it all from the hallway. They do not have to go into the patient room at all.

We are constructing our third research building which should be done in the fall. It will be the final research building and will be located on the east end of campus. We are going to have a parking ramp that is being designed this year and constructed next year. We are only adding 400 spaces due to the amount of the project and getting it through Congress, etc. It is being designed with the capability of adding another 400 on top. In regard to a question about where the parking ramp will be, Mr. Sharp stated they will tear down two old buildings that are not in use now, an old research building and another temporary building that is not being used will be torn down. The ramp will connect to the main hospital building for an enclosed entrance to the hospital.

Mr. Sharp gave an update on the remodeling being done inside, as the budget allows, to get rid of the institutional look.

There are three CBOC's in process. Groundbreaking was held in Ottumwa and will open in late fall. RFP has been put out for Sterling/Rock Falls, Illinois. We will be doing some site visits and a site will be awarded. Decorah, Iowa, is also in the same time line.

Our access is pretty good. The goal is less than 1 percent waiting for an appointment. We are at .7. We have been as low as .4½. We are staying below the goal and as you expect, the budget is tight so we are doing the best with what we have.

Chairperson Mulcahy thanked him for taking time to give an update.

VA Central Iowa
Health Care System:

Don Cooper introduced one of his staff assistants, Susan Martin.

We have just recently opened the CBOC in Marshalltown about 3-4 weeks ago and it is doing extremely well. The community has welcomed us with open arms. It has been very busy. We are scheduling approximately 5-6 patients a day. Others are showing up without appointments and they are being seen. We have one provider on the associated team at this point in time and we will be expanding that to two providers along with all of the team members within the next month or month and a half. The provider has been identified and is ready to come, but we are in process of identifying the support staff to make that a functional team. We will be at full staffing at that point and are looking forward to serving the folks in this area who have been very welcoming to us.

We have a large degree of construction going on as well. We have an outpatient addition that is nearing completion at this point. It should be done mid-June. We are shifting entrances. What is still currently our front entrance will be an addition at the front, two stories plus a basement, and will house prosthetics, the therapies to include physical therapy and occupational therapy, and then the outpatient clinics on the main floor and dental on the second floor. Those folks should all be moved in with the exception of dental, probably by mid-July or so. Dental will hold off a little longer because on top of that addition we are putting the third floor which will be an expansion and renovation of our 3D unit which is our med surge unit.

So when that is done we will have all single patient rooms on the med surge unit with their own bathrooms. Hope to do similar with tracks straight into the bathrooms and showers. State of the art med surge unit and we are really looking forward to giving veterans the care they need and deserve on that floor.

We are also planning for an expansion and renovation to add some square footage and then renovating the current space to modernize that facility. We are looking at doubling in that area and providing a much better flow through that whole space.

The new front entrance will be moved to almost the exact opposite side on our campus so all of our parking and the drives will now align with the new main entrance so it flows better through the whole campus. Along with that will be a new Canteen space and retail store. We are getting a coffee bar that should be ready about mid-July.

We are getting more warehouse space and adjusting some things with storage which is quite important because there is never enough room for that. We are working on a lot of other backend projects as well. We appreciate your continued patience with trying to navigate the campus.

We are also working on a traffic flow study that includes parking. The flow can always be improved so there is a project underway for design to realign some of the roads and change some of the parking so we have more parking and better flow.

We have the Golden Age Games coming up at the end of May. Come and volunteer for the Golden Age Games from May 25 – 31, 2010. It is one day longer. That means more volunteers will be needed and it is over the holiday weekend. We really want folks to help and support us, support the veterans. It is highly competitive in all sports and you really have a great time. If you need information on how to volunteer, let her know.

We continue to do well with wait times. We are right in line with where we should be and do not have any significant areas where we are having difficulties. Our CBOCs are doing very well with getting folks in. Budget is right on track. We should do quite well this year and watching that very closely and pushing the resources where we need to provide the best care possible.

Chairperson Mulcahy asked if they will bring what is across the street back inhouse? Are you renting that space or do you own it? She stated they actually had vacated that space and are no longer utilizing that and have terminated the lease. There were a mix of day programs through the mental health program and VISN or CO level staff who are just physically housed on our campus. The day program has gone over now to the mental health modular building, which is right next to Building 5. Our VISN and CO staff, among many others, have gone to an offsite lease near the Merle Hay Mall area in Des Moines.

Chairperson Mulcahy asked how much space are you actually renting off site? She did not know for sure. Don Cooper thought it was about 12,000 square foot. What we have over there now is all administrative and some telephone services.

Commissioner Phipps commented she mentioned the CBOC in Marshalltown is doing well. He encouraged people to stop by. It is state of the art.

John stated he would like to add that in the spirit of interagency cooperation, IVH is doing x-rays for the Marshalltown CBOC.

Someone asked if she has any updates on any of the other CBOCs, specifically Carroll, whether it is on track. Ms. Martin stated Carroll is on track and should be open maybe summer. Mason City is undergoing expansion because they outgrew their space. That should be completed very soon. Ft. Dodge is doing well, no major changes.

IDVA Update:

Patrick started with the office update. Budget is our major concern. We received the same amount of money as last year with 10% across-the-board cut. We do not anticipate any major problems with that. It will be tight, but we will make it through with the staff cuts we have already made. We do hope to fill Kent's position in the near future. We have asked for permission to fill that position and we are still awaiting approval. That is the only one we are anticipating filling right away.

As many of you know, our website was hacked into about six weeks ago. Homeland Security and Public Defense websites were also affected and received major damages. Our website is back up and operational. The nursing home database should be back online by the end of this week. We will be hosted by ITE under Public Defense's oversight. It will look a little different, but it will be the same nursing home reporting. All three websites had to be completely redone. They did not get into any data in ours. The nursing home database is completely protected on a different site, a very secured site.

Our Spring School is April 27, 28 and 29. At the present time we have 78 directors and 83 commissioners signed up. This is the largest amount we have ever had signed up for the School. We still have three weeks to go. It is going to be a big group this time. There will be CEU's for NASCO so they will get the training they need.

May 7 will be Vietnam Veteran Recognition Day at the Vietnam Memorial at the Capitol. A Cedar Valley Veterans Conference and Career Fair will be held April 14 in Waterloo sponsored by the Iowa Workforce Development program.

We are working on Executive Order 15, which is an ex-offender re-entry coordinating group. Iowa Workforce Development, Corrections and IDVA are trying to make sure we take care of veterans when they get discharged from prisons/correction facilities.

Our ScanTrak system will be updated to a new system and site in the future.

Cemetery Update: To date we have 467 burials. Patrick briefed Commission Members on the repairing of the west wall that gave way into the ditch. They just installed the 132nd Fighter Wing Monument at the cemetery last week. They poured the base for the Vietnam Veterans Monument which will be installed and dedicated Sunday afternoon, May 23.

The VA inspects the VA cemeteries every three years, so the Iowa Veterans Cemetery will be up for inspection next year.

Patrick explained the cremains of a World War I veteran were found in a Cedar Falls funeral home. He was born in 1886 and cremated in 1974. He served during WWI. From research, we found out his name was Dr. James Owen Perrine. From 1939 to 1951 he was assistant vice president of AT&T. He was a WWII advisor to the Navy on submarine detection. He developed a slide rule handbook in 1963. He has lectured at 173 US and Canadian colleges. He has a bachelor's degree, a master's degree and a doctorate's degree. He was a professor at UNI. He was a former county commander of The American Legion post in Cedar Falls. We know he had one son who died in 1984 in Colorado. We think there's a grandson. He is a direct relative of the Rockefellers. He will be buried in the Iowa Veterans Cemetery probably the second week in May. This will be the only WWI veteran buried there unless there is a disinterment someplace and moved.

A short break was taken to allow the VAMC's to leave. Chairperson Mulcahy thanked them for coming.

Iowa Veterans
Home Update: John Mathes thanked everyone for coming.

Last week, Eden Alternatives came to train IVH staff in culture change. IVH is working very hard to implement person centered care in a new and more enriching way. A part of that was to train 30 people who will become trainers at IVH. We are expanding our annual employee training from one day to two days. The second day will all be on person centered

care issues. We are very serious about getting this message to everybody. In addition, we will be training our supervisors in a three-day session within the next three months.

Our census continues to drop. Today our census is 678, an all-time low of any time John has been here. Part of it has to do with who we are taking in and part of it has to do with our response to our most recent VA survey in November. They asked us to review level of care for 30 people. We did and most of those people were changed from nursing to residential level of care. They also asked us to look at our Category 4 residents and we are in process of doing that. We found that we received referrals from the VA classifying a resident as nursing level. After the residents were at IVH, the VA would classify those same residents as residential level. We are sitting on perhaps 25-27 referrals from the VA who they have classified at nursing level but as we look at them, they look just like the people they are now calling residential level. We are asking for the decisions in writing for our records. If they are nursing level in the VA, then they are nursing level once they get here.

On a temporary basis, because we have an abundance of residential level people, we are gradually turning Malloy 2 South into a temporary residential level unit. That will help us to meet the 2.5 hours of care necessary in nursing on Malloy 2 North.

On construction, we are still on target to open the Amos Fox Unit, our 60-bed unit southeast of Sheeler, in December 2010. The Ulery Unit, which is directly south of the Malloy building, is still on schedule to open in August of 2011. In addition to those two construction initiatives, we are in the process of designing another 60-bed residence to be placed west of Malloy. That will be named the Fleming facility. We are also in the design process for renovating Sheeler and replacing Loftus buildings. Neither of those buildings will have nursing or residential level beds.

The selection process for a commandant resulted in no candidate, meaning the comfort level needed to be appointed to commandant. As early as today they will be reopening that job class and advertisement. They have some additional areas they want to advertise. John simply suggested if anyone knows someone who is a veteran and who has a valid Iowa Nursing Home Administrator's license, to encourage those people to apply.

On April 12 the north entry into the Dack building will be closed for the Dack Dayroom Expansion project. People who come in from the north will have to come in either through Malloy or through the side door in the Dack building just immediately west of where the current dayroom section is.

Diana Steiner then gave a brief fiscal update. Our census is continuing to drop. Since we are net budgeting, our revenues that we are generating are smaller. We are now projecting a \$1.1 million carry forward. We now have unlimited carry forward language; however, during the Legislative Session, they changed that for FY10. The first \$500,000 we will be able to keep and carry forward into next year's budget. The next \$1 million will be transferred to DHS. We can keep any money after that. Challenges for next year include no money funded for salary adjustment, which is usually around \$2 million a year. That includes staff getting their cost of living, step increases and health insurance increases. It has already been decided that people who are not in the union or not in union positions, which for IVH would be AFSCME and IUP, are not getting step increases or cost of living.

Our Appropriation for next fiscal year is status quo at \$9.6 million.

Chairperson Mulcahy commented that several years ago, IVH had a \$14 million budget. Then we went down to \$12 million budget, now we're down to \$9.6 million budget. How is this affecting the Home's operation? Diana responded that since we are net budgeting, we are generating more revenue. Because we're generating more revenue, our Appropriation is getting cut. We are staying status quo. It is just a different funding source. Stan commented that with the census dropping and the change of residential and nursing level of care, it will be challenging this year. Diana continued it will also be challenging because of the days of care and trying to open the pavilion next year with no salary adjustment dollars. We will have a better idea when we meet in July after we actually put the budget and all the pieces together. Chairperson Mulcahy stated he heard the expected cost to open the new building is approximately \$1 million and asked if that is in the budget? Diana stated no. Chairperson Mulcahy asked if that is not in the budget, how do we attempt to open the building? Diana continued that now that the Session is over and we finally have our numbers, we can start building our budget. Dennis will be talking about our retirement positions, the retirement plan the state is offering, and other factors.

John explained the State of Iowa has offered an early retirement package for employees. The intent is to save money. Essentially, their goal was that half of the people who were eligible for retirement would take it. Of those people who take it, we would save 50% of their salaries, which means you would replace 50% or fewer.

Dennis Mack, Director of Employee Services, explained the plan is called SERIP, State Employee Retirement Incentive Plan. The plan is available to anybody 55 years or older. If they have tenure of ten or more years, they are eligible for a cash incentive of \$1,000 per year of service up to 25. The maximum is \$25,000 that somebody would receive. They would have their health insurance paid for five years, regardless of age.

To date we have 67 people that have signed up for this plan. We will probably have over 75 by the deadline of June 24. Over 200 were eligible. We have a number of folks who are 55 – 59 that if they are not at the rule of 88 for retirement, this plan may not be real attractive to them. There are approximately 150 who have ten or more years of service and are 55 years old. They have to sign up by April 15 and to leave by June 24, which is the last day of the pay period this fiscal year. They can never come back to State government, which has been a problem in previous retirement programs. They retire then immediately come back in different roles.

Right now, we have six Food Service Workers who are retiring (which is just slightly under 10% of the workforce), four Laundry workers; and 26 positions in Nursing. Of those 26, there are four, possibly five, Nursing Unit Coordinators, (ward clerks) on the units retiring. That is a big hit. That group has been meeting for over a month trying to figure out how they are going to get the work accomplished with that many leaving. Five people out of Activities. We have some areas that are going to be hit hard.

The expectation was that you would not be able to fill 50% of the people taking the plan and you would have to save 50% of the cost of everybody that retires. We cannot leave half of nursing empty. The State has requested each agency submit a plan by April 15 on how we are going to handle these vacancies. We have met twice. We are meeting again Monday to update our information based on the additional names that we have received. The last time we met, we had 55 or 56. And based on those people, we could save the 50% by filling all of the positions except 17 out of that 55. We know when we meet Monday with 67 now, we will still be able to fill a lot of those positions and still achieve the 50% savings. The reason for that is out of all of these positions, right now, there are only 4 that are supervisors. The rest are all line workers. So your salary savings is affected by that. When you look at the salaries, all of them are at the top of the range when retiring. We would fill at the bottom of the range. That is how you get your significant savings from this. John sent a report to the Department of Management listing how many positions we had and how we achieved the 50% savings. We wanted them to know that we can do this without gutting 50% of the retiree positions. We have not received a response to that. The state figured the savings on 1,000 employees taking SERIP. The number is now over 1,000.

Dennis commented that all non-contracted employees had to take seven furlough days and contract employees had to take five days. The state took the money associated with that out of our budget right away. Discussion followed that we will be paying overtime for staff to cover those taking furlough days.

Our overtime has dropped. In response to a question about decreasing overtime, Dennis and John responded that we have been as creative as possible. We have been extremely focused in terms of making sure that we are running as close to minimums as we can. One of our first steps was how do we attack overtime. And, as an organization, we attacked that very well. Another impact is that we have also had a reduced number of call-ins.

Dennis stated we are at two-thirds of the way through the year and 66% of our furloughs used. It was up to the employee to schedule them; however, if we get towards the end of the fiscal year, we may have to schedule if they have not used it up. With all of these retirements, the expectation is that everybody who retires takes their furlough days. We have paid it so there is no reason to double pay it.

Dennis stated there could be some new opportunities. We have already looked at how we can combine some operations or change the way we are doing some things. In the long run, that will be positive.

Stan explained part of that is delegating. We have already been piloting that on Dack 4. Instead of the Rec person, the Nursing staff can go on the recreation trip. In staff self-scheduling, they figure all of that out, so when we do lose a Rec person who is pulled from that unit, they take up the slack in their ability to manage their time.

Lisa Purvis thanked those in attendance who helped her this year. It was a very good session for veterans in general. Iowa does a pretty good job in veterans benefits and we are making progress on that every year. One of the bills this Legislative Session was the government reorganization that will affect all of the agencies in creating efficiencies.

We did not pre-file any bills this year so a lot of what we saw was in response to the budgeting, the reorganization and early retirement. One thing we did push for during the Session was the ability to provide financial assistance to IVH residents, either on their behalf or directly to them, for any resident who participated in the Community Re-entry Program. This was in response to issues for residents in the Community Re-entry Program who are not able to build up enough funds to go out in the community and get started to either rent an apartment or put a down payment on utilities, etc. This will allow us to assist them in getting back into the community. We will be developing some internal policies that will address this.

Non-contract employees will not receive a step or an increase in their cost of living. We do not have all the enrolled bills yet, and do not have bill numbers on the rest of them. Patrick briefed attendees that \$900,000 was taken from their Appropriation and \$90,000 from the Merchant Marine Bonus fund into the County grant program so every county will get

\$10,000. The remaining Merchant Marine Bonus fund (\$53,000) is swept for Cultural Affairs to staff a committee to oversee fundraising for the USS Iowa project. There will no longer be a Merchant Marine Bonus fund. We have three Merchant Marine Bonus applications that will be processed before July 1 for less than \$1,000. The Merchant Marine Bonus will be gone after July 1.

Patrick stated the USS Iowa bill will be signed next week. Chairperson Mulcahy asked Patrick to send him a list of the bills that passed. Patrick stated once they are all signed, he will put something together. Lisa also stated that once all of the information is together, she will put this information on the IVH website. She will collaborate with Patrick to make sure all of the veteran-related bills are put together in one spot to make it easier to follow things.

Lisa asked attendees to keep taking a look at the IVH website. It does change every once in a while. We do put new construction photos on there. We also have a link on our website with a map that is up-to-date with the parking and access information. It also has information on all of the press releases of what is going on around here.

Commissioner Phipps expressed his opinion of Iowa paying for California using the Iowa ship to make it a recreation area.

Chairperson Mulcahy explained the Legislature requested money from the Iowa lottery tickets and the Trust Fund money to pay California. Chairperson Mulcahy was asked and checked with various veterans and no one agreed. So the Legislature decided to appoint a ten-member committee to raise the \$17 million needed. The \$53,000 from the Merchant Marine Bonus is to fund that ten-member committee.

Chairperson Mulcahy thanked Lisa on behalf of himself, John and Elizabeth for leading the charge at the Iowa State Legislature this year on behalf of veterans. She did an excellent job and was always there and told us where we needed to be.

Chairperson Mulcahy thanked John on behalf of the Commission. John will be leaving May 1. He appreciates all John has done. He is a true veteran's advocate, though he is not a veteran. It is people like John and Lisa that make veterans' lives easier. And he really appreciated it. John thanked him. "It's been an honor."

Patrick also thanked John. He also thanked Commissioner Phipps as this will be his last Commission meeting as his appointment is completed the first of May. Patrick thanked him for his service for the last several years.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Chairperson Mulcahy explained what is going on with the commandant selection. DAS will be re-sending out the notice and try to get a broader search. The search will end the first of May. During May they will start their selection process again. Due to prior commitments, Chairperson Mulcahy will be unable to sit on the selection committee and has asked Commissioner McMartin to do so.

Chairperson Mulcahy announced Commissioner McMartin was reappointed as The American Legion representative; Commissioner Jacobus was reappointed as the representative for the National Guard. Becky Dirks Hausted has been appointed to represent the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Patrick was also reappointed as Executive Director of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs.

Public Comment: Elizabeth Ledvina thanked Sue Lerdal from the Legislative Service Agency and Zeke Furlong from the Iowa Legislature for helping them when they had questions.

Elizabeth talked about the lack of residency beds in the State of Iowa. Where can veterans go who only need residency care? Local nursing homes will not take them and there is a waiting list at IVH. John had no answer.

Elizabeth reminded Patrick that when we had training, he was going to send a letter out to the Counties to remind them that they will not get accreditation training in the State of Iowa this year. She asked if that letter had been sent out. Patrick explained they will be giving CEU training but not accreditation. The law stated accreditation training would only be offered one year in Iowa. Commissioner McMartin reminded Patrick that there are many new people coming on board in the counties and they are under the impression that we are offering an accreditation class in the fall and so they do not think they have to get accreditation training in Minnesota in May. For that reason, they have not registered for the Minnesota training. When they do find out there is not accreditation in Iowa in the fall, it will be too late to obtain that training in Minnesota. It was indicated a letter needs to be sent out, and it was also previously agreed a letter would go out to all counties to remind those individuals that if they have not been accredited by July 1, by state code, they are out of a job. Discussion followed. Patrick will send the letters out as soon as possible.

Bennie Spain passed out a copy of an orientation book Bennie developed to help newly-appointed commissioners. Bennie commented on how the veteran cannot be helped in the State of Iowa because the Code has no teeth in it. There are too many loopholes and the counties are so fragmented as to who reports to who. There is this infighting and you don't see

the people. Black Hawk Commission gave Bennie the task of creating an orientation book because there is nothing in Iowa for Commissions when they come aboard. This is his attempt to help commissioners understand a little better. This is the first attempt. Bennie asked for input and criticism.

Patrick commented he has been receiving many applications for burial at the Veterans Cemetery from people who have not served two years active duty. The new law with the definition of a veteran only affects the county issues and county relief. The new law does not affect any benefits to the VA whatsoever.

Next Meeting: After short discussion, the next meeting will be Wednesday, 7/7/10, 10 a.m., at Camp Dodge.

Commissioner Mulcahy thanked Commissioner Phipps for giving of his time for the Commission. He has been here as a commissioner for several years. He has provided us a lot of input. We really appreciate the fact that you have given your time and helped us navigate. So before everybody leaves, we have cake here for you and we'd like to have a little 10-15 minutes for refreshments.

Commissioner Phipps stated he appreciated working with the Commission, but he wanted to say this gentleman (Bennie Spain) put it right on the head. "The Commission has become nothing but cosmetic in the State of Iowa because it has all turned to politics. Everything is politics. I had great hopes. I was asked to go on the Commission back in the '60's and I turned it down. But I watched it along and it didn't get better, it got worse. I even had silly thoughts I might be able to change the way it operated. But there was no change. It is still politics and it is getting worse. But I do appreciate, we try to do things, but most of your authority is taken away from the Commission. And some of us have gotten into a rut, whether we value politics or the veteran. So I'll still be around. I'll still be getting in people's hair, but they won't pay no attention to me." Everyone thanked Commissioner Phipps.

Break: Meeting break held from 12:15 – 12:34 p.m.

000023 After discussion, Commissioner Waychus made a motion to approve \$500 unemployment and \$500 on eyes as long as we know they are going to pay the difference, \$375. Second by Commissioner Phipps. There was no further discussion. Vote taken; motion approved unanimously. Application approved.

000252: After discussion, Commissioner Waychus made a motion to deny. Second by Commissioner McMartin. Vote taken; motion approved unanimously. Application denied.

- 000320: After discussion, Commissioner Waychus made a motion to pay. Second by Commissioner McAllister. Vote taken; motion approved unanimously. Application approved.
- 000346: After discussion, Commissioner Schroeder made a motion to deny. Second by Commissioner Phipps. Vote taken; motion approved unanimously. Application denied.
- 000348: After discussion, Commissioner McAllister made a motion to defer for a denial letter from the VA. Second by Commissioner McMartin. Vote taken; motion carried unanimously. Application deferred.
- 000349: After discussion, Commissioner McAllister made a motion to defer pending review of the property. Second by Commissioner Williams. Vote taken; motion approved unanimously. Application deferred.
- 000351: After discussion, Commissioner Delamore made a motion to defer. Second by Commissioner Schroeder. Vote taken; motion carried unanimously. Application deferred.
- 000352: After discussion, Commissioner McAllister made a motion to defer for verification of income. Second by Commissioner Phipps. Vote taken; motion carried unanimously. Application deferred.
- 000353: After discussion, Commissioner Waychus made a motion to deny the application. Second by Commissioner Williams. Vote taken; motion carried unanimously. Application denied.
- 000354: After discussion, Commissioner Waychus made a motion to defer until a doctor's statement is received. Second by Commissioner Williams. Vote taken; motion carried unanimously. Application deferred.
- Next Meeting: The next Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs meeting will be held Wednesday, July 7, 2010, 10:00 a.m., Camp Dodge, Johnston, Iowa.
- ADJOURNMENT: With no other business to come before the group, the meeting adjourned at 1:23 p.m.
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comm mtg 4/28/10